United Nations A/C.1/55/PV.21

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

First Committee
21st meeting
Monday, 23 October 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: U Mya Than ..... (Myanmar)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 65 to 81 *(continued)*

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

The Chairman: Before calling upon the first speaker on my list I should like to inform the Committee that before this meeting closes I shall briefly explain to members of the Committee the rules of procedure to be followed during the voting that will start on Wednesday, 25 October 2000.

Mr. Thu (Myanmar): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.41, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", on behalf of the following sponsors: Algeria, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Panama, Philippines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and my own delegation.

We have tabled our traditional resolution since the fiftieth anniversary of the General Assembly. Our resolution reflects the majority view of the Non-Aligned Countries, although it is not a formal Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) draft resolution. It has been an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) draft resolution since last year, with the broader sponsorship and support of a large number of the NAM countries.

We introduce our draft resolution with a vision of nuclear disarmament leading to the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons by practical concrete steps. We reflect the positive outcome which we achieved at the 2000 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We drafted the resolution on nuclear disarmament to reflect present-day realities and priorities, including a call for the convening of an international conference on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects at an early date.

Draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.41 in its operative paragraphs, inter alia, urges the nuclear-weapon States to stop immediately the qualitative improvement, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems; also urges the nuclear-weapon States, as an interim measure, to de-alert and deactivate immediately their nuclear weapons and to take other concrete measures to further reduce the operational status of their nuclear-weapon systems; calls upon the nuclear-weapon States, pending the achievement of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, to agree on an internationally and legally binding instrument on the joint undertaking not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, and calls upon all

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

00-70251 (E)

States to conclude an internationally and legally binding instrument on security assurances of non-use and non-threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States; calls for the immediate commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator and the mandate contained therein; calls for the conclusion of an international legal instrument or instruments on adequate security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States; calls for the early entry into force and strict observance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); reiterates its call upon the Conference on Disarmament to establish, on a priority basis, an ad hoc committee to deal with nuclear disarmament early in 2001 and to commence negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament leading to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons; and calls for the convening of an international conference on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects at an early date to identify and deal with concrete measures of nuclear disarmament.

Those are some of the key elements in our draft resolution. Its main thrust is the proposal for a phased programme of nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons to achieve the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. I should like to ask Member States of the Committee to lend their overwhelming support to draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.41, as they did for the resolution last year.

Mr. Mohammad (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation wishes to express its opinion on draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.41. The use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and represents a crime against humanity, according to relevant United Nations resolutions. That is why nuclear disarmament represents one of the fundamental priorities of the international community. The unhealthy international atmosphere that prevails at present, where we see violations of the Charter, the use of force, and interference in the domestic affairs of States, provides additional reasons for strengthening our efforts in order to prepare a convention on nuclear disarmament. That objective is not an academic or theoretical one. It never was a theoretical goal. Nuclear weapons have been used twice against innocent civilians, in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the danger of using those weapons still remains, inasmuch as the weapons still exist, unless there is a convention banning their use.

In this context I should like to refer to paragraph 6 of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters (A/55/349), where it states that the nuclear doctrines advocated by certain nuclear States are focused on nuclear deterrence and the threat of use of nuclear weapons or the possibility of their use. That is why it is up to all States, especially the nuclear Powers, to ensure that we abstain from the use or threat of use of these weapons. That is why we support the draft resolution as a positive measure to ban nuclear weapons until the day when nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction have been totally eliminated.

Mr. Nteturuye (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): May I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. My delegation is convinced that under your leadership our work will head in the right direction and will be crowned with success.

In my capacity as the Chairman of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which was created on 28 May 1992, I am taking the floor to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.12 on activities of the Standing Advisory Committee with regard to regional confidence-building measures which the countries of Central Africa are progressively taking at the regional level in the security arena.

Ever since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 54/55 A of 1 December last year, many decisions have been taken at the various meetings designed to carry out the work for the period 1999-2000. Three ministerial meetings of the Advisory Committee were held in N'Djamena and Bujumbura. One subregional conference on the proliferation of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in Central Africa was held in N'Djamena from 25 to 27 October 1999. Moreover, a subregional conference on the question of refugees and displaced persons in the Central African subregion was held from 14 to 16 August this year in Bujumbura. All these gatherings were designed to ensure the effective implementation of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa

(COPAX), created on 25 February 1999 in Yaoundé. They are also designed to set in motion the early-warning machinery and the mutual assistance pact entered into in Malabo in February 2000.

Little by little, therefore, security cooperation structures in Central Africa are being set up. Other major projects are likewise under way, notably, the creation of a subregional parliament in Central Africa and the establishment of a subregional centre for human rights and democracy.

Central Africa is going through turbulent times at present, particularly in the Great Lakes area being ravaged by war with all the evils that brings in its wake, such as the displacement of peoples both beyond and within borders. Subregional initiatives such as those I have already described are worthy of both the attention and support of the United Nations to see to it that peace and development once again take their proper place in that part of the world. That is why I am asking the Committee to express its support and solidarity for the draft resolution by adopting it unanimously.

Mr. Ngoh Ngoh (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is taking the floor under agenda item 74 (a) to express its support as a sponsor for draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.12, dealing with the work of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which has just been introduced by the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Burundi.

Ever since its inception, the Advisory Committee has played a very significant role in promoting peace, security and development in Central Africa. It has proved to be a special way of people working in concert with one another and of strengthening confidence among the countries of the subregion. It has made remarkable progress, and among its achievements one can cite adopting specific disarmament measures, enacting confidence-building measures and promoting cooperation in the security arena as being the most noteworthy. The meetings of the Committee are for the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence and for the upper echelon civilian/military cadres of the member countries and are regular opportunities to get together to work in concert on a variety of specific issues affecting their common security and to devise measures or decide on joint action. In a number of cases, these steps have managed to dissipate tension and reduce insecurity in border areas.

Above and beyond the ministerial meetings, the Committee organizes regular meetings enabling member countries to take a close look at specific peace and security issues facing them and to strive to come up with specific solutions. There was the seminar on concrete disarmament measures, organized with a group of interested States in Yaoundé in July 1998; the high-level seminar on the implementation in Central Africa of recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict in Africa, held in Yaoundé in July 1999; the subregional conference on the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms at N'Djamena in October 1999; and, most recently, the subregional conference on the question of refugees and displaced persons, held at Bujumbura in August 2000. All these have led, each and every time, to the adoption of major recommendations or decisions designed to respond appropriately to the security issues identified.

The ceaseless conflicts that for too many years now have been rending Central Africa have brought in their wake countless victims and destruction of all kinds, sowing fear and insecurity and severely mortgaging the prospects for development of the countries in the region. Efforts made by member countries in the context of the Standing Advisory Committee are a clear manifestation of their determination to break out of this vicious cycle of violence, death and poverty and to create appropriate conditions for the peace, stability and security likely to foster development and the well-being of their peoples. These efforts most assuredly are worthy of the support of the international community.

The Committee can be proud of having contributed to laying the groundwork for a real system of collective security at the subregional level, the beneficial effects of which on peace, stability and development in the subregion are already perceptible and will grow stronger over time. The preceding speaker listed the achievements of the Committee, including a non-aggression pact and a mutual assistance pact; the setting up of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, responsible for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts; an early-warning mechanism, conceived as a preventive diplomatic instrument; and a subregional centre for human rights and democracy, which will strive to

promote human rights, democratic principles and a culture of peace in the subregion.

However meritorious the efforts of the countries of Central Africa, alone they could not possibly have achieved such praiseworthy results or such promising achievements. My delegation wishes in this connection to express its profound gratitude to the United Nations Secretariat, in particular the Department for Disarmament Affairs, for the constant backing throughout of the work of the Standing Advisory Committee. We should also like to thank the group of interested countries for their invaluable support, together with the Member States of the United Nations whose invaluable contributions to the Trust Fund have made it possible for the Committee to better organize its work. The countries of Central Africa hope to continue to benefit from increased solidarity within the international community for the implementation of the major machinery for peace, security and promotion of development already mentioned. A consistent contribution to the Committee's Trust Fund would be an appreciable manifestation of this solidarity and an invaluable support for the cause of peace in Central Africa. We thank all the Member States for their support, especially the delegations in the First Committee, for their solidarity and unfailing support every year for the countries and peoples of Central Africa in adopting the resolution on the activities of the Standing Advisory Committee without a vote. We strongly hope that again this year we will enjoy this support and that draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.12 will be adopted by consensus.

Mrs. Pereira (Brazil): I have the honour of introducing draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.19, entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas", on behalf of the following sponsors: Angola, Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Madagascar, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe. I also wish to acknowledge that after L.19 was printed four new countries — Bahamas, Honduras, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Sao Tome and Principe — also decided to co-sponsor the draft resolution. I should point out that the majority of those 75 countries are members of the four existing nuclear-weapon-free zones.

This is the fifth consecutive year that a draft resolution on this important matter has been introduced for the consideration of the First Committee. This year Brazil has been joined by New Zealand as initiators of a resolution that gathered 157 votes in favour at the last session of the General Assembly, a significant increase over the previous year. We express the hope that draft resolution L.19 may enjoy the same broad support.

There have been some important changes to this year's draft resolution from last year's text. A new third preambular paragraph incorporates the concept of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which was highlighted as a main achievement of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and which is at the core of nuclear disarmament efforts and nuclear-weapon-free zone initiatives.

The fifth preambular paragraph recalls the provisions of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly on nuclear-weapon-free zones. The reference to the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was withdrawn. New sixth and seventh paragraphs stem from a division of the fifth paragraph of last year's resolution. We removed the word "ultimate" that qualified the common objective of achieving a world entirely free of nuclear weapons.

In the operative part of the draft resolution, in paragraph 4 the word "ultimate" is also deleted and language consistent with the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) "to work for the total elimination of ... nuclear weapons" was added. We are convinced that these expressions should not cause problems to any State party to the NPT. We introduced a new paragraph, operative paragraph 6, that mirrors a concept that has been present in the seventh preambular paragraph since the first year the resolution was introduced. We considered that cooperation among the existing

nuclear-weapon-free zones could be enhanced by means of joint meetings of the signatories and parties to the treaties that established those zones. We welcome the efforts being made by the four zones to further their common objectives. We have listened very carefully to the comments of some interested delegations. Those comments are being considered by the initiators and will be discussed among sponsors and potential sponsors later today.

In the nuclear disarmament area, one of the most significant developments of recent decades is the fact that in several parts of the world the nuclear option has already been ruled out. The regional treaties, with the addition of the Antarctic Treaty, contributed to freeing the southern hemisphere, and the adjacent areas north of the Equator where the treaties apply, from nuclear weapons. The States parties to those treaties, in close consultation with their neighbours, renounced the acquisition of nuclear weapons and accepted stringent verification commitments to that effect. Our initiative is aimed at achieving recognition by the General Assembly, for the fifth consecutive year, of the progressive emergence of a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. Such recognition should be considered as confirmation of the commitments of the international community towards non-proliferation and disarmament.

We reiterate that, as in previous years, our draft resolution does not create new legal obligations. It does not contradict any norm of international law applicable to navigation, such as those contained in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The changes introduced this year do not touch either on the language of the law of the sea or on the core dispositions of operative paragraph 1. We call upon States that have not yet done so to move towards ratification of the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties and their protocols. The idea that most of the globe is nuclear-weapon-free is a powerful beacon. It adds momentum to the process of nuclear disarmament and bolsters the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

We wish to put on record our appreciation of all those who voted in favour of resolution 54/54 L last year. We expect to continue to deserve their support.

Mr. Rybakov (Belarus) *(spoke in Russian)*: The entry into force of the treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa and Southeast Asia, the recognition of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Mongolia, the continued efforts of the States of the Middle East to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region, negotiations to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia and proposals to establish such zones in the southern Caucasus and Central and Eastern Europe are all natural movements towards the international community establishing a nuclear-free world. Certainly all these initiatives are at the various stages of implementation. Some regions, which are free of nuclear weapons, have withstood the test of time, others are at the stage of discussion, while some are simply at the stage of an idea being put forward. One thing is certain, the efforts of countries are directed towards establishing comprehensive, equitable security for all. In this connection, the international conference which Secretary-General Kofi Annan proposed be held could find the means to remove the nuclear threat and establish a world free of nuclear weapons.

The establishment of global security should supplement the regional efforts being made to increase the effectiveness of overall measures to control weapons and strengthen trust. On this basis, Belarus once again points out the humanitarian aim of the initiatives of the President of the Republic of Belarus, Alyaksandr Lukashenka, to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe. Now, when no nuclear weapons are present in any of the countries of the region, their assuming a legal obligation not to deploy them on their own territories could provide an exceptionally important impetus for further strengthening security in the European family of nations. As before, we are convinced that the initiative of the Republic of Belarus to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe would meet the long-term interests of both the European continent and the entire international community.

The historic opportunity provided to the States of this region and of Europe with the geopolitical progress made at the beginning of the nineties should not be missed. We realize that currently dominating political factors make the adoption of this proposal by the majority of countries in the region difficult in the immediate future. However, we are not losing hope that this noble initiative will be implemented. The Belarus delegation intends to continue the search for agreement on this issue, including at this session of the General Assembly. In this connection we wish to point out

ongoing work to prepare a consensus text of the resolution, bearing in mind the position of all sides.

Mr. Hoang (Viet Nam): On behalf of the delegations of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) I wish to take this opportunity to express our full support for two draft resolutions under consideration by the First Committee at this session, namely "Nuclear disarmament", contained in document A/C.1/55/L.41, and "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*", which appears in A/C.1/55/L.48. We would like to thank the drafters, Myanmar and Malaysia respectively, for their efforts in coming up with these draft resolutions.

First, we wish to emphasize that among the draft resolutions introduced this year on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Myanmar's is the most comprehensive in nature. The ASEAN countries join in co-sponsoring this draft resolution in the hope that the international community will work hard together for the goal of the total elimination of all nuclear weapons and to build a world free from such weapons in the near future. We are fully aware that this is a difficult endeavour, and we call for concerted efforts from both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States to carry out this task. The ASEAN countries, firm in their belief in nuclear disarmament as expressed in their attachment to the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, fully support the adoption of this important draft resolution.

Secondly, we fully commend Malaysia's tireless efforts in upholding the historic advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) by introducing the draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*". The ASEAN countries attach great importance to the ruling of the ICJ on 8 July 1996, which stated that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would be generally contrary to the rules of international laws that are applicable in armed conflicts, and to its unanimous conclusion that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. We earnestly call upon the Member States of the United Nations to fulfil this obligation without delay by commencing multilateral negotiations next year leading to the early conclusion of a nuclear-weapons convention banning the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons and providing for their elimination.

Ms. Moules (Australia): Australia has the pleasure of introducing the draft resolution entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty" (CTBT), together with Mexico, New Zealand and Japan and another 70 original sponsors as listed in document A/C.1/55/L.37. Since the draft resolution was submitted, the Lao People's Democratic Republic — whose National Assembly recently approved ratification of the Treaty — the Philippines, Sierra Leone, Turkey and Ukraine have also co-sponsored the draft resolution.

The international community embarked upon the project of banning all explosive nuclear tests nearly half a century ago. But it was only when the cold war ended that the international community was able to develop a comprehensive ban. When the time was eventually right for us to do so, the Treaty took less than three years to negotiate. Now, however, the CTBT is in the paradoxical position of both being a highlight of recent efforts on arms control and disarmament and also, regrettably, constituting unfinished business. The conclusion of and strong support for the Treaty, which has firmly established a powerful international norm against further nuclear testing, can be considered to be a major achievement. But four years after the Treaty was adopted by an overwhelming majority in the General Assembly, it has not yet entered into force.

This draft resolution has always had a straightforward aim — to contribute to ongoing efforts to meet the Treaty's preconditions for entry into force. A call for the achievement of the early entry into force of the CTBT therefore constitutes operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution this year. That call, often issued by individual countries, and by the General Assembly each year through this resolution, found a ready resonance at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which recognized entry into force of the CTBT as a key step towards the implementation of our collective responsibilities on nuclear disarmament.

Australia continues to draw encouragement from the progress made by the CTBT Preparatory Commission to establish the international monitoring system, a key component of the Treaty's verification

machinery. The global monitoring system represents a large investment by the international community. It will generate significant running costs, but will be the guardian against further nuclear testing. Efforts to ensure the system is operational and effective at the time of entry into force of the Treaty are significant, and operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution recognizes that. Early entry into force of the Treaty would enable us to capitalize on our investment.

Operative paragraph 3 urges States to maintain their moratoriums on nuclear weapons test explosions or any other nuclear explosions, pending entry into force of the Treaty. Operative paragraphs 4 and 5 concern the prerequisites for entry into force. They call for all States to sign and ratify the Treaty and for those that have not yet done so to refrain from acts that would defeat its object and purpose in the meanwhile. We believe these calls are transparent and balanced. For our part we will respect the call made in our own draft resolution in operative paragraph 6 and remain seized of this issue at the highest political level. Recent efforts at the United Nations Millennium Summit exemplify the type of progress that can be generated by high-level political impetus, and we urge others to continue sending unambiguous signals of support, at the highest levels, for entry into force of the Treaty.

Finally, we express the hope that this draft resolution could be adopted without a vote this year. Its aims are straightforward and transparent. It is intended to deliver entry into force of this crucial Treaty, no more, no less.

Mr. Borrie (New Zealand): It is a pleasure to join with the other lead sponsors — Australia, Mexico and Japan — in putting forward the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/55/L.37. The CTBT is of immense significance for New Zealand. For decades we have been one of the strongest advocates of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban as an essential step along the road to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and we worked actively for the conclusion of the Treaty and its adoption in 1996. But the CTBT is not yet in force. It is essential for the enhancement of international peace and security that a universal and internationally and effectively verifiable nuclear test-ban treaty should enter into force at the earliest possible date.

The draft resolution we put to the Committee is transparent and balanced. Its calls are straightforward. Its focus is on the need for all States to sign and ratify the Treaty. For New Zealand, universal adherence to the Treaty has always been crucial. But we believe, nonetheless, that countries which have carried out nuclear tests in the past and which have signed but not yet ratified the Treaty have a particular responsibility to confirm their commitment to the test ban. We very much hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus this year, and we are pleased that it has solid sponsorship, as was the case with last year's resolution.

It is vital and timely that the international community sends an unequivocal signal of support for the CTBT. This draft resolution, which is factual and draws upon sources that have found the widest international support, will achieve that goal.

Mr. Yamaguchi (Japan): Japan welcomes the introduction of draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.37 on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by the representative of Australia. Last year Japan was one of the original sponsors of the resolution on the CTBT and is pleased to be able to be so again with this year's draft resolution.

The draft resolution calls for an early entry into force of the CTBT, which is one of the highest priorities of the international community in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In this connection it is worth recalling that the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons agreed on the importance and urgency of this matter. Since last year the number of ratifiers of the Treaty has steadily increased and now stands at 65. Through its efforts to promote ratification by other States, Japan has learned that there is a good prospect that that number will grow further in the near future, though the world community still has a considerable distance to go before realizing the entry into force of the Treaty.

Japan ratified the Treaty in 1997 and has been making vigorous efforts to encourage ratification by other countries, including those whose ratification is necessary for the Treaty's entry into force. Over the past year Japan has held high-level talks with some of the key countries in order to engage with them and urge them to take action for entry into force. In this regard we welcome the pledges made by India and Pakistan to sign and ratify the Treaty. We also welcome the very

recent ratification by the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Japan will continue to make these efforts so that the Treaty will enter into force at the earliest date possible.

My delegation also welcomes the moratoriums declared by all the States concerned and would like to emphasize the significance of operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, which urges States to maintain their moratoriums on nuclear weapons test explosions or any other nuclear explosions, pending entry into force of the Treaty. Japan strongly hopes that this draft resolution will be adopted with the widest support of Member States.

Mr. Salander (Sweden): I wish to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.4, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda", on behalf of the delegations of Algeria, Angola, Austria, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya, Kuwait, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Uganda, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The sponsors of the draft resolution have engaged the Committee over the past three sessions with a view to giving a new impetus to nuclear disarmament and to securing agreement on an agenda that would become a benchmark for future action in achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. The pursuit of nuclear disarmament had clearly lost impetus after the end of the cold war. The obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control, as required in the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, was clearly not being lived up to. Nuclear weapons were being re-rationalized for the post-cold-war period, and the prospect of the indefinite retention of these weapons was becoming entrenched. We were all sworn to nuclear disarmament. We could therefore no longer hide behind the shibboleths of the cold war. The acceleration of the process leading to the achievement of nuclear disarmament was overdue.

The sponsors of the new agenda have challenged complacency in the fulfilment of the obligation to advance the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. They have insisted that each requisite step in this process be addressed within the perspectives of an unequivocal commitment to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons provided the forum for the elaboration of a set of agreements on the elements and structure for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. Most importantly, the Final Document of that Conference fundamentally alters the context in which nuclear disarmament must henceforth be pursued. That context is the unequivocal commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament.

The Final Document, adopted by consensus among the States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), represents a new beginning in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. It defines the steps to be taken; it provides for the further development of each of the steps agreed; and it anchors the NPT in a more fundamental way as the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Final Document is neither as far-reaching nor as detailed as the States parties were entitled to expect. The compromise it represents reinforces the determination of the sponsors of this text that the steps agreed at the Review Conference shall indeed be implemented without prevarication or delay.

In the draft resolution proposed to the Committee this year the sponsors reflect the results of the engagement both between non-nuclear-weapon States and between them and the five nuclear-weapon States over the past three years. The sponsors are fully conscious that in a number of instances the common ground on a future approach is more generalized than we would have wished. But we believe that real progress has been achieved in setting out benchmarks. These will enable us in future to evaluate the implementation of each of the agreed undertakings. They also provide an agreed basis on which each element can be further developed and defined.

For the sponsors it is imperative that what was agreed between the States parties to the NPT be brought before the General Assembly with a view to its being adopted by the United Nations as a whole. The achievement of nuclear disarmament requires

participation by all the Member States of the United Nations. Previous resolutions have set out the concerns of the international community at the prospect of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons. They have recalled that the vast majority of States entered into legally binding commitments not to acquire nuclear weapons in the context of the corresponding legally binding commitments by the nuclear-weapon States to pursue nuclear disarmament. They have emphasized that the possession of nuclear weapons must not be considered legitimate indefinitely. They therefore called upon the nuclear-weapon States to give an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the speedy and total elimination of their nuclear arsenals and to engage without delay in an accelerated process of negotiations, thus achieving nuclear disarmament, to which they are committed under article VI of the NPT.

The draft resolution before the Committee underlines the fundamental significance of the unequivocal commitment that the nuclear-weapon States have now made to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear weapons. It also sets out the agreed elements for the process of negotiations that will be required to achieve that goal, and it calls for the urgent implementation of each of the agreed steps. It expresses deep concern at the continued risk represented by the possibility that nuclear weapons could be used. The draft resolution also acknowledges the steps that have been taken by the nuclear-weapon States, but it underlines the fact that despite reductions the total number of nuclear weapons deployed and in stockpiles still amounts to many thousands. It must also signal the international community's concern that nuclear arms reductions are currently stalled.

The draft resolution sets out the measures that the nuclear-weapon States must undertake, as well as those instruments that the non-nuclear-weapon States, working with the nuclear-weapon States, must accomplish. It calls for the development and implementation of interim measures so as to lessen the role of nuclear weapons in security policies of concerned States and to further reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons systems. It reinforces the paradigm of irreversibility as we progress towards nuclear disarmament, and it urges greater transparency to support further progress on nuclear disarmament.

At the sixth Review Conference the parties to the NPT urged the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. They agreed on the necessity of negotiations on a fissile material treaty, and they agreed on the necessity of establishing in the Conference on Disarmament an appropriate subsidiary body with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament. These agreements underline the continuing validity of a multilateral role in the field of nuclear disarmament, which is central to the approach of the sponsors of this draft resolution.

The non-adherence to the NPT of three Member States of the United Nations, which operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, is a matter of ongoing concern to the international community. The draft resolution calls for universal adherence to the Treaty and for those three States to bring into force the required comprehensive safeguards agreements and to reverse clearly and urgently any policies to pursue any nuclear-weapon development or deployment.

Every process, particularly one as complex as nuclear disarmament, requires constant monitoring and adaptation. Draft resolution L.4 sets out a comprehensive programme of action. Some steps have to be taken by the nuclear-weapon States, some by the nuclear-weapon States and their allies, and some by all States. There is an imperative built into this approach that requires results in each of the segments of action. The sponsors are determined to monitor the achievement of these results in the light of the unequivocal commitment recently made. The sponsors are also intent on elaborating on each of the elements that make up this programme of action so that genuine progress towards the goal of nuclear disarmament can be registered in future years. The draft resolution recalls the resolve of our heads of State and Government at the Millennium Summit to keep all options open for achieving the elimination of nuclear weapons, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers.

In the year 2000 we have in our possession the beginning of what must become a sustained offensive on the scourge to humanity represented by the existence of nuclear weapons. It is the expectation of the sponsors of the draft resolution that the Committee, in adopting this draft resolution, will reflect the will of our constituency, the peoples of the world, that we can achieve a global ban on the development, production, transfer and use of nuclear weapons within this generation.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): Let me briefly recount my country's views of the key nuclear disarmament issues currently before us. We are considering draft resolutions, the stated aim of which is to assist the international community to reach the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. These draft resolutions seek to use as their basis the consensus results of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Review Conference was important, because for the first time it produced a comprehensive and substantive Final Document by a true consensus. The Final Document charts a realistic course for the future and indicates the direction for progress on all substantive issues involving the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The United States, for its part, will seek to move forward on the nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament agenda set forth in the Final Document.

Much attention has been focused on the practical steps listed in the Final Document. Some of the nuclear-disarmament-related draft resolutions before us are said to be aimed at translating the commitments in the Final Document into early practical action. We do not question the motives behind these initiatives, but let us remember that the outcome of the NPT Review Conference was the product of delicately balanced compromises. Taking individual disarmament measures out of their context in the Final Document, or attempting to expand the undertakings given in the Review Conference results, can only endanger the Conference's hard-won consensus.

The United States believes that the NPT Review Conference consensus charted a course for the future. It did not create a basis for seeking a more expansive disarmament agenda. The United States will evaluate proposals to follow up on the NPT Review Conference results by how faithfully they reflect the Conference consensus. We all agree that the practical steps included in the Final Document need to be implemented, but if we create endless permutations of the concepts the Document contains, we will only blur the goals we are seeking and make them harder to achieve.

A number of actions related to article VI of the NPT have already been taken since the Review Conference ended in May. President Clinton and Russian President Putin have met three times, and during the Millennium Summit they agreed on a Strategic Stability Cooperation Initiative as a constructive basis for strengthening trust between the two sides and for further development of agreed measures to enhance strategic stability. In June the two Presidents announced the completion of a bilateral agreement on management and disposition of nuclear-grade plutonium withdrawn from their respective nuclear-weapon programmes and declared excess to defence purposes. That agreement will help to ensure the irreversibility of nuclear-weapons reductions by requiring that 68 tons of plutonium — 34 tons from each country — be disposed of in a manner that precludes its re-use in nuclear weapons.

As we look to the implementation of practical steps towards nuclear disarmament, we should recall that the fissile material cut-off treaty — a measure that all of us have accepted as the next item of business for multilateral negotiation — remains a prisoner of political manoeuvring. It is now seven years since the General Assembly adopted its consensus resolution supporting the treaty, and five years since member States of the Conference on Disarmament agreed on a mandate in Geneva. That consensus was confirmed only two years ago in the First Committee and by all the NPT States parties at last May's Review Conference. A universal, verifiable cut-off of fissile material production from a date certain is the essential next step if we are to make concrete progress on the agenda outlined in the NPT Review Conference Final Document.

Absent progress on a cut-off treaty, there is no incentive to consider other proposals for multilateral nuclear arms control. Yet two, or perhaps three, States in the Conference on Disarmament continue to frustrate the efforts of a succession of Conference Presidents to achieve an agreement that will get serious treaty negotiations started. One excuse after another has been offered for not permitting the treaty to go forward, from the need to curb a non-existent arms race in outer space to the United States initiative for limited national missile defence. President Clinton's announcement on 1 September that he would leave a decision on national missile defence deployment to a successor means that there are now no more excuses for delaying action in the Conference on Disarmament. We now have more time to meet our friends around the world, explain why we believe that a national missile defence is needed and why a national missile defence as we envisage it will strengthen, not threaten, strategic stability.

In any case, it is long past time for negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty to get under way, and as the Final Document states, they should begin immediately. Let us get the record straight: a national missile defence, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) and outer space are not the problem. The real problem is the unwillingness of two or three Conference on Disarmament members to agree to move forward on a cut-off treaty. The real issue is obfuscation, delay and disingenuousness. Those who have no strong commitment to an enterprise can always invent imaginary problems, blame others and work to hide behind the reality that they may not really be serious about moving ahead at all.

A draft resolution on the ABM Treaty has again been introduced at this year's General Assembly. The United States believes that President Clinton's national missile defence decision, as well as other factors, should have made this unnecessary. That resolution was a source of fruitless contention last year. We continue to believe that it is inappropriate for the General Assembly to insert itself into an ongoing discussion about implementation of an international agreement among the parties to it. The draft resolution also takes the highly dubious position that the ABM Treaty should not be amended, even though the Treaty specifically provides for it. Moreover, it invites the General Assembly to take sides in the argument. In our view these issues are for the Treaty parties to decide themselves.

Several months ago the United States suggested to the main sponsor of this draft resolution that we did not need a resolution on the ABM Treaty this year. If a resolution on issues related to strategic stability were needed, there was more than enough agreed, non-controversial language from which one could be created. For example, the five permanent members of the Security Council issued a statement on 1 May that addressed these issues. The United States and Russia have also issued three strategic stability statements, including one that was signed by both Presidents.

The ABM Treaty was negotiated and signed in a different era and under different political and military circumstances. The amendments the United States is proposing will bring the Treaty up to date and enable it to continue to fulfil its purposes. These purposes are to ensure that the strategic nuclear deterrent forces of neither the United States nor Russia is threatened by missile defence capabilities of the other, and to make it possible to continue our mutual reductions in strategic offensive arms. The ABM Treaty of 28 years ago did not contemplate the new threats that are now emerging. If the ABM Treaty were to fail, the responsibility would rest with those who insisted that it had to remain static and could not be adapted.

The United States is disappointed that its more cooperative approach to this draft resolution was rejected. We will again oppose the draft resolution and urge other delegations to do so. Far from strengthening the ABM Treaty or strategic stability, this draft resolution contains dangerous precedents and special pleading. United Nations Member States need to move beyond this kind of rhetorical posturing if our work is to be relevant to the realistic pursuit of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. De la Fortelle (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like to take the opportunity of the thematic discussion to take the floor on behalf of the following countries: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and my own country, to introduce, under agenda item 75 (d), "Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research", a draft resolution presented by France in document A/C.1/55/L.3/Rev.1, entitled "Twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research".

It is worthwhile recalling why my country — as it did in 1990, 10 years ago — wished once again to introduce this draft resolution. During the tenth special session of the General Assembly — better known as SSOD-1, the first special session devoted to disarmament — in 1978, the President of the French

Republic proposed to the Secretary-General the creation of an independent United Nations institute for disarmament research. It was ratified during the session and came into being in Geneva in 1980. It had a light yet efficient structure. After a difficult beginning it then found its cruising speed. Then, on a French initiative, the General Assembly was able to adopt by consensus resolution 45/62 G, on 4 December 1990, marking the tenth anniversary of the Institute.

At the time when the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) celebrates the twenty years since it was created, we cannot pass up the opportunity to note our appreciation for the work it has already carried out, encourage it to continue and call the attention of the Secretary-General to the need to seek, in the context of existing resources, ways and means to increase the financing for the Institute. I must say that my task is easier now. The Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, put forward this idea when he spoke to us at the beginning of our work last October, when he declared from the rostrum:

> "The Committee also has solemn responsibility to remain vigilant about emerging issues, a task that is performed with the assistance of another important component of the United Nations disarmament machinery: the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), which is now celebrating its twentieth anniversary. I congratulate its Director, Patricia Lewis, and her small but dedicated staff on their enriching the disarmament community with high-quality research." *(A/C.1/55/PV.3, pp. 7 and 8)*

So I can do no better in paying tribute to the entire team at UNIDIR than to quote the Under-Secretary-General.

Before concluding, I wish to thank the 70 sponsors who have gone along with this text, and to express the wish that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Issa (Egypt): I have pleasure in presenting the draft resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", document A/C.1/55/L.29. Since 1994 the General Assembly has adopted the resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". This draft resolution, which is presented by Egypt and other sponsors, enjoys the overwhelming support of Members of the United Nations. It conveys the concern of the international community over the continued presence of unsafeguarded nuclear activities in the Middle East and the resulting risk of nuclear proliferation in the region.

This issue is of particular importance and priority today, since all countries in the Middle East except Israel have become parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and have accepted comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards on their nuclear activities. The draft resolution extends to Israel the invitation to join the 182 States that have renounced the nuclear-weapon option, an invitation whose acceptance has become an obligation that members of the international community are obligated to pursue if the NPT is to remain a credible instrument and continue to have non-proliferation value.

On 19 May 2000 the international community took a leading step in addressing this concern in the 2000 NPT Review Conference by distinctly recognizing the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East and emphasizing in explicit and unequivocal terms the importance of Israel acceding to the NPT and placing all its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. The consensus Final Document adopted by the Review Conference is a positive contribution to all non-proliferation endeavours in the Middle East. The draft resolution before the First Committee this year flows from this consensus. It faithfully reflects principles and language that were accepted and adopted by all NPT States parties in May 2000, just five months ago.

There are certain changes to the draft resolution which build entirely on the language contained in the consensus Final Document. They are a new sixth preambular paragraph that recognizes the commitment of the States parties to the NPT to achieve the universality of the Treaty, and a new eleventh preambular paragraph that stresses the need to advance towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and for all States in the region to place their nuclear facilities under IAEA full-scope safeguards. A new operative paragraph 1 reaffirms the importance of Israel's accession to the NPT and placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East. Operative paragraph 2 calls on Israel to accede to the

NPT, thereby accepting the same obligations that have been entered into by all States of the region.

Draft resolution L.29 is not of a confrontational nature; rather it prompts Israel to accept the same legally binding non-proliferation commitments that have been accepted by all other States of the region, indeed by 182 States already, and to refrain from any action which could undermine regional and international peace and security. The universality of the NPT in the Middle East is the message of the draft resolution. It was deemed an urgent priority by the 1995 decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and was reaffirmed by the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

All States that are parties to the NPT and that participated in the 2000 Review Conference are urged to support this draft resolution. To do otherwise would be a mockery of the Final Document adopted by them in May 2000, and would give the message that selectivity should be the norm in arms control activities. We urge all Members of the United Nations as well as States parties to the NPT to transmit a clear and forceful message through the General Assembly affirming their commitment to the world of nuclear non-proliferation, a message that would also reflect that the consensus achieved only five months ago at the Review Conference is respected and that there will be no double standards when it comes to addressing the risk of nuclear proliferation.

We have witnessed over the past three weeks a deterioration in the political situation in the Middle East of terrifying proportions. Despite that, we continue, as we have always done, to approach the issue of non-proliferation in the Middle East as it relates to the security arrangements in the region, indeed as a prerequisite to any future regional security arrangement there. This approach is distinct from the political settlement of the Middle East conflict through what is known, perhaps euphemistically, as the peace process. We trust that the current situation in the Middle East will not tolerate any leniency or complacency on the issue of nuclear non-proliferation, or any other issue, for that matter. The call for prompt action from the General Assembly must be unequivocal and unwavering, because the question at hand is the credibility of the non-proliferation regime and the credibility of States that profess support for this regime.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): In our general statement I had the occasion to note that this year the graph of hope for disarmament and non-proliferation seemed to have risen, mainly due to the consensus reached at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and due to the wise decision taken by the President of the United States to defer deployment of national missile defences. Pakistan hopes that the unequivocal commitment to eliminate nuclear weapons given at the NPT Review Conference will indeed be implemented, although Pakistan is not as optimistic about the prospects of such implementation as some of our friends seem to be.

Our positive and constructive response to the outcome of the NPT Review Conference reflects Pakistan's evaluation that there is no difference in the essential objectives of Pakistan and the international community with regard to the promotion of international peace and security, especially in South Asia. Our objectives, and those of the international community as we understand them, are to lower tensions and avoid war in South Asia, prevent nuclear escalation, promote regional stability and seek equitable solutions to underlying disputes and problems, especially the Kashmir dispute. Unfortunately, like Security Council resolution 1172 (1998), the outcome of the NPT Review Conference dealt with South Asia partially and inequitably. We have stated that several aspects of the Conference's decisions are such that we must express our strong disagreement with them.

First, we note that the Conference dealt with the security situation in South Asia in several parts of the Final Document. To ensure fair and implementable decisions the NPT parties should have invited the concerned countries to participate in any discussions and negotiations on South Asian security issues and should have provided them an opportunity to participate on an equal footing. My country does not accept ex parte pronouncements which impinge on our national security. Also, the Conference's pronouncements on South Asia are deficient in substantive terms on several counts. There is criticism of the 1998 nuclear tests. Pakistan did not initiate the nuclear tests in South Asia. We had every political and legal right to respond to our neighbour's nuclear tests. While its tests destabilized the security environment in South Asia, Pakistan's tests restored the nuclear

balance. Therefore, we cannot accept formulations that fail to make the distinction between the ambitions of the first and the compulsions of the other.

Pakistan has never sought recognition for its nuclear capability from anyone, but we will never compromise or concede our ability to deter nuclear or other aggression against Pakistan from any quarter. While the NPT consensus says that the nuclear tests in South Asia did not confer status, I would submit that the political effect of making such an assertion is exactly the opposite. Indeed, another implication of making this assertion is the confirmation that the five nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT do have such status and thus the justification of their possession and retention of nuclear weapons. Certainly that was not the intention of the majority of the NPT parties. If the tests of 1998 were to be criticized, why did the NPT parties not find it possible to criticize the tests that had taken place previously, a few years before, or a decade before that, which contributed immensely to the proliferation of nuclear weapons? That was a manifestation of the discriminatory nature of the provisions relating to South Asia in the document.

The inclusion in the NPT document of provisions based on Security Council resolution 1172 (1998) is, in our view, meaningless and irrelevant. That resolution has been overtaken by the realities created in South Asia by our neighbour. Despite Pakistan's persistent endeavours for non-proliferation, nuclear weapons are now a reality in South Asia because of the refusal of the great Powers to restrain our neighbour's progressive nuclear escalation. Most nuclear-weapon States appear to have acquiesced in the nuclear and military ambitions of our neighbour. In any case, they have not actively supported Pakistan's proposals for nuclear and conventional restraint and the resolution of outstanding issues in South Asia. Pakistan's proposals are the most realistic basis on which to promote durable security, stability and arms control in South Asia and to promote non-proliferation in South Asia.

Furthermore, the decisions of the Review Conference have made discriminatory demands on South Asian countries to accept a fissile material production moratorium. That call was not made either on the five NPT nuclear-weapon States or on States in other regions of the world. Pakistan has joined the international consensus that a ban on the production of fissile materials can be achieved only through a universal, non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable treaty negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament, but we will not accept an obligation that is in advance of the conclusion of these negotiations, especially one that is arbitrary and inequitable.

It is also strange that the NPT Conference not only called for the immediate commencement of negotiations on the so-called fissile material cut-off treaty, which we accept, but also emphasized its conclusion "within a period of five years". We do not accept artificial deadlines, as we stated in our general statement. Calls for such time-frames would have become more credible if there was also agreement for time-frames for the elimination of nuclear weapons and for the conclusion of measures to prevent an arms race in outer space. All these matters that I have mentioned impinge directly on Pakistan's vital security and national interests, and we are obliged to reject them.

Apart from the direct and unacceptable references to South Asia, we note that the NPT consensus also has certain significant omissions. Most importantly, there is no reference to the one issue that is likely to threaten strategic and regional stability, and that is the plan by certain States to deploy ballistic missile defence systems. Equally, while a time-frame is indicated for the cut-off treaty, there is no similar time-frame for the steps towards nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

For all these reasons the Pakistan delegation will not find it possible in the Committee to support any draft resolution that welcomes the results of the NPT Conference or incorporates the discriminatory and unacceptable elements of its decisions that I have mentioned.

Mr. Kaba (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): In taking the floor once again I should like, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you, Sir, and all the members of the Bureau, on the masterful skill with which you have been guiding our work. I should also like to express to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, how very much we appreciate the clarity and relevance of his opening statement, which enabled each and every one of us to get a precise idea of exactly where the disarmament issue now stands.

As a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.11, entitled "Assistance to States for curbing illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them", my delegation supports with real interest the presentation by the

representative of Mali to the Committee. Indeed, the international community, notwithstanding the significant strides recorded in a variety of arenas, still finds itself faced with numerous challenges that continue to jeopardize international peace and security, thus compromising the durable development that our countries strive for so much. Among these challenges we must cite the alarming proliferation and circulation of light weapons, which bring destabilization of our countries in their wake. The Committee will therefore understand how much importance my delegation ascribes to the draft resolution so that the international community will take more directly into account the efforts of States against this scourge.

Our deliberations are occurring at a time when, since 1 September of this year, my country has been the target of deadly attacks by armed bands coming from neighbouring countries in conflict. That is why Guinea sees, not without concern, in this illicit circulation of light weapons a serious threat to its own security and to the stability of the entire West African subregion of which it is part. In that light, my delegation believes it is essential that the efforts of our States to promote peace and development should be further supported by strengthening and promoting the process of economic integration begun by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). That said, my country appreciates quite rightly the recent visit by a major delegation from the Security Council to our subregion, which is facing real destabilization spawned by the circulation of light weapons due to the persistence of these conflicts, the serious consequences of which will, without a doubt, prove catastrophic for all our States if an appropriate response is not found to deal with them.

With the ill-considered accumulation and illicit circulation of light weapons in West Africa we see the spectre of violence becoming more threatening. The situation today has led to a significant deterioration in the climate of confidence and good relations among many countries, which is harmful to the consolidation of peace and security in our subregion. In this context the support of the United Nations for the efforts of ECOWAS in the quest for peace and conflict prevention will contribute substantially to promoting a concerted approach among the different States and the variety of actors in designing an approach grouped around common goals likely to promote and progressively strengthen the dynamic process of integration indispensable to stability and the harmonious development of our States. Along these lines, the Bamako Moratorium, the "Flame of Peace" of Timbuktu, Mali, and of Agadez in Niger, as well as similar steps involving the collection and destruction of light weapons carried out in South Africa, demonstrate the same resolute determination of our countries through real action to halt by all means the illicit circulation of light weapons and to foster a better climate of greater confidence among the countries.

As the Committee is aware, wherever peace and justice are violated, real human tragedy is the eventual result. I have in mind here refugees — these men, women, children and aged persons, innocent victims of these crises — forced to go into exile and to seek housing and shelter elsewhere. It is in regard to this situation that the Guinean Government, having established the National Committee on Light Weapons, is working tirelessly to carry out participative community development projects and programmes likely to help in the eradication of the root causes of this traffic and these conflicts, thanks to the support of the international community through the United Nations and other development partners.

It is in the same context that we see the second support conference on stability and sustainable development in Guinea, soon to be held under the aegis of the United Nations with the involvement of lenders. It will certainly enable my country to cope with the numerous constraints linked to our being an immediate neighbour to countries in conflict. As we have said from time to time, Guinea, which is paying the heavy price of the adverse impact of more than a decade of crisis along its borders, can only welcome the holding of the upcoming international conference on small arms and light weapons. In this perspective, my country will continue, together with other States, resolutely to work towards devising and implementing a comprehensive, strict system designed to regulate the transborder circulation of light weapons. That is another way of saying that my delegation's support is based upon our firm conviction that as long as that scourge is not put behind us, peace and security will remain under threat.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Arab Republic of Egypt has submitted a draft resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East" on behalf of the members of the League of Arab States, including the

Syrian Arab Republic. My delegation supports the draft resolution, convinced as it is that the situation of tension prevailing in the Middle East requires a greater effort on the part of the international community in order to oblige Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

In this respect I wish to say once again that there is no reason to justify the fact that Israel insists on not acceding to the NPT, since today more than 182 countries are parties to it, including all the Arab States, without exception. The results of the Review Conference held recently at United Nations Headquarters in New York represent the international community's recognition of the need to put an end to nuclear proliferation, which represents a considerable threat to international peace and security. The message sent out by the NPT Review Conference is extremely clear, and there is no need to interpret it in various ways. The only interpretation is the elimination of nuclear weapons. The Conference demonstrated the serious resolve of the international community to eliminate nuclear weapons and not to accept any justification for not acceding to this extremely important Treaty. Justifications presented by Israel, including its allegations regarding security for the population during the peace process, are unacceptable. The Arab populations are those most in need of security, especially since Israel possesses the most lethal and sophisticated conventional and chemical weapons in the world.

The Middle East region today is seeing the escalation of tension following the actions perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian people, Israeli threats against the Arab countries, and the obstacles placed by Israel on the path to peace. Thus we hope that the international community will strive to convince the only country in the Middle East still not a party to the NPT to adhere to that Treaty. The Arab summit which ended its work yesterday in Cairo appealed to the international community and asked Israel to adhere to the Treaty and to open its nuclear installations to International Atomic Energy Agency inspection.

The lax attitude of the international community vis-à-vis Israel is unacceptable because it represents a danger to the efforts of the international community in this area and could encourage other parties not to abide by the international will. That is why once again we call upon all States to support the draft resolution regarding the nuclear threat in the Middle East, because the draft explains the desire of the Arab States to ensure security in their region and throughout the world.

The Chairman: That completes the list of speakers for this morning. Does any other delegation wish to speak at this stage?

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): My delegation is taking the floor to support draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.41, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", introduced by the representative of Myanmar this morning. My delegation advocates its adoption for the following reasons.

The Final Document of the Tenth Special Session, the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978 accorded the highest priority to nuclear disarmament. Paragraph 50 of that Document calls for the urgent negotiation of agreements for the cessation of the qualitative improvement and development of nuclear-weapons systems, the ultimate goal of which should be the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including their means of delivery.

During the 2000 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the States parties reiterated the urgent need for nuclear disarmament. A noteworthy aspect of that Conference was the unequivocal commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to pursue negotiations with a view to completely eliminating their nuclear arsenals. The recently adopted United Nations Millennium Declaration in its section II also emphasizes the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. For these reasons my delegation believes that this draft resolution needs to be supported by the highest majority of the Committee.

Programme of work

The Chairman: In accordance with the programme of work and the agreed timetable, the Committee will begin the third phase of its work, namely, action on all draft resolutions submitted under agenda items 65 to 81, on Wednesday, 25 October, at 3 p.m. As we approach the third phase, I should like to outline the procedure that the Committee will be following regarding voting on draft resolutions. Members may recall that this procedure is outlined in rules 123 to 133 of the rules of procedure of the

General Assembly. I wish now to make a few practical comments.

First, there are a few steps in the voting procedure for action on draft resolutions. At the outset of each meeting, delegations will have an opportunity to introduce revised draft resolutions, if any. I underline the word "revised". Then I will call upon those delegations wishing to make general statements or comments other than in explanation of their position or vote on the draft resolutions in a particular cluster. Thereafter, delegations may proceed to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken. After the Committee has taken a decision on a draft resolution, I will call upon those delegations wishing to explain their position or vote. Therefore, delegations will be able to explain their votes before and after the vote on draft resolutions, but must signal to the Chair or inscribe their names on the list of speakers in advance.

Second, in accordance with the rules of procedure, sponsors of draft resolutions are not permitted to make statements in explanation of their votes. They are only allowed to make general statements at the beginning of the meeting, or comments on clusters. If delegations are sponsors of a draft resolution they cannot explain their votes. I think that is quite logical and sensible.

Third, in order to avoid misunderstandings, I urge those delegations wishing to request a recorded vote on any particular draft resolution kindly to inform the secretariat of their intention before the Committee begins action on any individual cluster. We must know in advance. That includes recorded votes on specific paragraphs. With regard to deferment of action on any draft resolution, delegations should also inform the Secretariat in advance. Every effort should be made to refrain from resorting to deferment of action. Again, please inform us in advance.

I should like to explain the indicated timetable for taking action on the draft resolutions. For the benefit of delegations I intend to circulate in advance a list of the draft resolutions to be taken up on specific dates in one week so that delegations may know which draft resolution will be taken up on which date and may seek instructions as appropriate. We have today circulated informal working papers Nos. 1 to 4 listing draft resolutions to be taken up during this week from 25 to 27 October. These papers result from consultations with the sponsors. I hope that delegations will find the schedule circulated in advance to be useful for their necessary preparation and forward planning.

The schedule is, of course, only indicative and is subject to change as required. When there is a need to adjust daily schedules we shall circulate the revised schedule on that particular date. I also wish to inform members that the work of the Committee is proceeding very smoothly and that, with your cooperation, we may be able to finish it slightly earlier than the date originally scheduled, which was 3 November. At this stage we cannot be definite, but judging by the way things are going it seems that we may be able to conclude work slightly earlier.

If there are no other comments, I would reiterate that on Wednesday, 25 October, the Committee will begin action on draft resolutions in clusters following the indicated sequence. Action may be postponed at the request of the delegation with convincing reasons, or because the draft resolution will require a statement of the programme budget implications by the Organization.

I now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Itzchaki (Israel): My delegation wishes to exercise its right of reply on draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.29, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". The spirit of cooperation essential for peace is being undermined and strained by the introduction of this draft resolution. It is contentious, divisive and one-sided. Resolutions regarding the complex arms control reality in the Middle East should focus on ways to enhance confidence, not undermine it. This biased draft resolution neglects the fact that the real risk of proliferation in the Middle East emanates from countries that, despite being States parties to international treaties, do not comply with their relevant international obligations. These countries are engaged in ongoing efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

In addition, the text submitted to the First Committee has undergone changes and now contains harsher language in relation to Israel. This draft resolution singles out Israel in a manner in which no other country is singled out in the First Committee. Moreover, it undermines the achievement of the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of

Nuclear Weapons because it takes out of context the delicate balance in which this document was adopted. Israel urges every country and every Member of the United Nations to vote against this draft resolution.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): I have a few announcements. Today we circulated informal working papers Nos. 1 to 4. I draw attention to informal working paper No. 2, where it is noted, in cluster 7, that action on draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.10 is to be deferred. In other words, the Committee will not take up that draft resolution on Thursday.

Furthermore, members may notice that document A/C.1/55/INF.2 is an information note by the secretariat listing additional sponsors of draft resolutions. This paper tries to facilitate the work of the Committee by including the names of all the sponsors. However, if more sponsors come in before action is taken, I will read out their names at the time of taking action on the specific draft resolution.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt): I am asking for the floor to respond to the statement by the delegation of Israel regarding draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.29. The draft resolution is not of a confrontational nature but is rather to prompt Israel to accede to the same internationally legally binding non-proliferation commitments as all other States of the region have done — indeed, as 182 States have done — and to refrain from any action which could undermine regional and international peace and security. In doing so the draft resolution faithfully reflects the consensus reached just five months ago on the importance of universal adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East and of Israel's accession to the Treaty, a consensus that was shared by all States parties to the Treaty. The draft resolution conveys the concern of the international community over the continued presence of unsafeguarded nuclear activities in the Middle East and the risk of nuclear proliferation in the region resulting therefrom. This issue is of particular importance and priority today, since all countries in the Middle East except Israel have become parties to the Treaty and have put their nuclear activities under the comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

The Chairman: The Committee will meet again on Wednesday, 25 October, at 3 p.m. in Conference Room 1 to begin the third phase of our work.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.